SOUTH JERSEY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

FARLEY SERVICE PLAZA
P.O. BOX 351
HAMMONTON, NEW JERSEY 08037
(609) 965-6060 • 800-658-0606 • Fax (609) 965-7315

Jon S. Corzine
Governor

Stephen Dilts
Chairman

Bart R. Mueller
Executive Director

April 24, 2009

The Honorable Frank A. LoBiondo
United States House of Representatives
2427 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-3002

Re: Request for Available SAFETEA-LU Funding for High Priority Transportation Project: *Direct Connector Road from the Atlantic City Expressway to the Atlantic City International Airport*

Dear Congressman LoBiondo:

The South Jersey Transportation Authority (SJTA) requests consideration by the Congress of the United States for funds to complete the planning, feasibility and environmental assessments and preliminary engineering for the development of a direct ramp/road connection between the Atlantic City Expressway (ACE) and the Atlantic City International Airport (ACY).

Project Support

This project is an identified project of the Atlantic City Regional Transportation Plan, a comprehensive transportation program for the southern New Jersey developed collaboratively with major transportation funding and operation agencies in the state (NJDOT, NJT, SJTA, SJTPO, CRDA, NJ Turnpike Authority, Atlantic County and Atlantic City), along with the NJDEP and NJ Pinelands Commission.

The SJTA supports this project and views it to be a project of high importance that will have a major impact on future travel and tourism in the region.

Project Description

This project will complete the planning, feasibility assessment, alternatives analysis, preliminary engineering and environmental impact assessment needed for the

construction of a direct connector ramp/roadway between the ACE and the ACY that is approximately 2 +/- miles in length.

When the ramp is constructed it is expected that there will be separate access routes for the FAA Tech Center and the airport. Amelia Earhart Boulevard will continue to provide access to the FAA Tech Center while the new connector road will provide a direct access to the airport. There will be an at-grade connection between Amelia Earhart Boulevard and the connector to extend the benefits of the direct connector road to the FAA Tech Center traffic coming from or going to the ACE.

A one-page description of the complete direct connector ramp/roadway project as developed for the Atlantic City Regional Transportation Plan is provided for as an attachment to this letter.

Project Benefits

- **Addresses Future Airport Growth Needs**. Addresses future growth requirements for the ACY as the number of passengers per year grows 5-fold in the next ten years.
- **Addresses Future Regional Growth Needs**. By separating airport traffic from the local roadway network additional capacity is created that can better accommodate anticipated population growth and the development of an FAA Research Park and Hotel adjacent to the airport.
- **Improves Accessibility to and Visibility of the Atlantic City International Airport.** The direct connector will make the Atlantic City International Airport more accessible and more visible for passengers traveling via the Atlantic City Expressway since it will eliminate the circuitous current access on local roads.
- **Provides needed Access to the Future Regional Bus, Rail, Shuttle and Auto Multimodal Transportation Center (RMTC).** One of the future uses of the RMTC will be to serve as an intercept for automobiles headed for Atlantic City. The direct connection ramp will expedite access to the RMTC.
- **Reduces Congestion and Provides Additional Capacity on the Local Roadway Network**. With the removal of ACE passenger and FAA Tech Center traffic from the local roadway network, existing congestion and delays are eliminated and additional capacity on the local roadway network is available to address proposed hotel and Research Park development.

Public Participation Process

As the project advances through feasibility and alternatives analysis, public participation efforts will be undertaken through outreach efforts established for the Atlantic City Regional Transportation Plan. Additionally, this project will require the completion of an Environmental Impact Statement which will include a public participation component.

Funding Sources that will be Used to Advance the Project

The work on the Atlantic City Regional Transportation Plan did not cease with the development of plan projects. At the present time SJTA is working with other agency

plan participants to develop an implementation team that will continue to work on the funding, design and construction of all 33 projects identified for the region. The project will be implemented with SJTA funding. However, part of the work of the implementation team will be to determine any sources of funds to be utilized.

Thank you for providing this opportunity to provide input into the determination of funding needs for the transportation projects of high priority and regional significance for all of New Jersey and particularly the southern region.

Please feel free to contact my, or Dennis Culnan of my staff should you have any questions about the information contained in this letter.

Sincerely,

Bart Mueller
Executive Director

Project 12: Direct Connection from the Atlantic City Expressway (ACE) to the Atlantic City International Airport (ACY) – Exit 9 Improvements

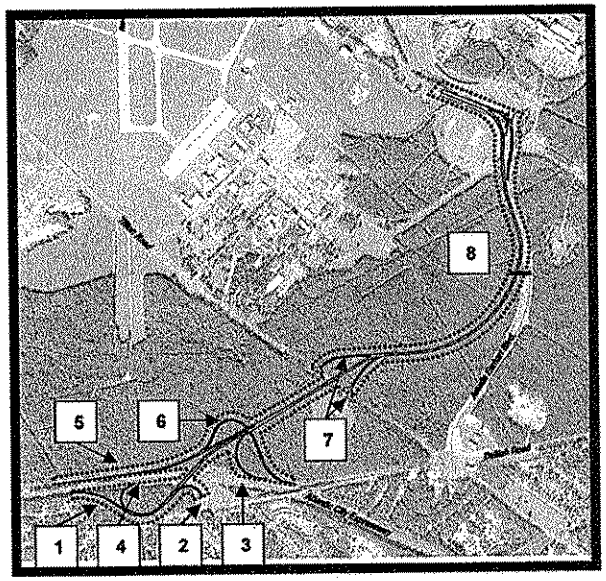
Background

The area around the Atlantic City Airport (ACY) is a regional growth center. The airport and the adjacent FAA facilities are current trip generators, and the planned expansion of the airport and a new technology park will further increase traffic in the area.

Currently the connection between the ACE and the ACY is circuitous using local roads like Delilah Road and Amelia Earhart Blvd. The airport traffic is required to negotiate Tilton Road/Delilah Road/Amelia Earhart Blvd. traffic circle which results in travel delays. This circle is being studied for potential improvements. A direct limited access connection between the ACE and the airport will not only benefit airport bound-passengers and employees but will also help reduce traffic issues at the circle and will free up local road capacity.

Assuming that a new regional multimodal transportation center at ACY (along with a new regional fixed guideway system) becomes operational in the future as recommended by this plan, even more motorists from the ACE will be attracted towards the ACY. Thus, this direct roadway connection can be of critical importance to create an easy access to the airport site in order to shift auto traffic to alternative modes of transportation in the future.

Strategy



With this strategy the existing ACE Exit # 9 would be significantly modified to provide a full grade-separated interchange.

1. From the eastbound ACE, a new exit ramp will continue as the new Connector Road.
2. There will be a slip ramp connecting to Delilah Road from this eastbound exit ramp.
3. From westbound ACE, a new exit ramp will merge into the connector road alignment.
4. The merge ramp from the connector road to eastbound ACE will be a loop ramp.

5. The westbound ACE merge ramp from the Connector Road will be a high speed direct access ramp.
6. A grade separated ramp connection will be provided from Delilah Road to westbound ACE, which will merge into the westbound merge ramp from the Connector Road.
7. A partial grade separated interchange at the Connector Road and Tilton Road junction will enable traffic movements between Tilton Road and the Airport.
8. There will be separate access routes for the FAA Tech Center and the airport. Amelia Earhart Blvd. will continue to provide access to the FAA Tech Center while the new connector road will provide access to the airport. There will be an at-grade connection between Amelia Earhart Blvd. and the connector road to extend the benefits of the direct connector road to the FAA Tech Center traffic coming from or going to the ACE.

Key Planning Issues

- Sizing of the connector road facility should be consistent with requirements and needs of the future regional multimodal transportation center.
- Potential environmental impacts - Due to the nature and extent of the environmental resources located in the vicinity of the roadway, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) review will be required.
- Potential property impacts – the connector road alignment will impact properties owned by the SJTA, FAA and other private owners.
- Integration with other infrastructure improvement projects in the vicinity – potential benefits due to this direct connection should be considered while analyzing infrastructure improvement needs in the general vicinity like the Tilton Road/Delilah Road traffic circle improvement project.

Time Frame / Staging / Cost Estimate

TOTAL PROJECT COST ESTIMATE:
$ 112 million (2008 Dollars)

2009	Feasibility Assessment	$ 1.12 million
2010	Environmental Assessment	$ 1.12 million
2011	Preliminary Engineering	$ 2.24 million
2012	Final Design	$ 5.60 million
2013	Right-of-Way Acquisition	$22.40 million
2014	Construction	$79.52 million